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ABSTRACT

Essays examine development of the English language from Old English to the present, characteristics and use of contemporary varieties, and what the language means to speakers around the world. "English Voices" (Joan Swann) raises issues and questions about variation in English, to be addressed in later chapters. "English Manuscripts: The Emergence of a Visual Identity" (David Graddol) traces the visual history of English from early runic engravings to contemporary texts. "The Origins of English" (Dick Leith) provides an outline history of English within England to the Middle Ages. "Modernity and English as a National Language" (Leith, Graddol) examines processes of linguistic standardization since printing began. "English--Colonial to Postcolonial" (Leith) traces the spread of English throughout the world in relation to colonialism. "Variation in English Grammar" (Linda Thomas) examines some grammatical characteristics of English varieties. "Accents of English" (Susan Wright) asks what distinguishes one English accent from another, patterns of variation and change, and social meanings conveyed by accents. "Style Shifting, Codeswitching" (Swann) looks at how individual speakers routinely codeswitch to represent different aspects of their identity. "Good and Bad English" (Donald Mackinnon) examines aspects of diversity and change from a philosophical perspective. Contains 216 references, timeline, phonology chart, and index. (MSE)

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